



# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## CHRISTIAN TO RECEIVE CULTURAL MEDAL

Dr. Ken Ishihara, 80-year-old member of the Shinanomachi Church in Tokyo, has been selected and formally approved by the Prime Minister's Cabinet to receive a Cultural Medal for his contributions to the cultural life of Japan. A brief presentation ceremony will be held at the Prime Minister's official residence on Nov. 4.

Dr. Ishihara teaches at Aoyama Gakuin graduate school and at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, besides continuing his studies in Christian History. Last year, he had published a lengthy work on the formation and history of the U.C.C.J. (Kyodan). He has also written books on "History of Christians" and "History of Christian Thought". He is a graduate of Tokyo University where he majored in philosophy. He served as president of Tokyo Women's College for several years and became president emeritus in 1948.

The aged, but energetic Doctor feels that this presentation of a Cultural Medal to a Christian in recognition of his



studies in Christianity, reveals that "recognition is being given to the importance of the contribution of Christianity to Japanese society." In this sense he states that it is a "joy to accept this recognition as a representative of all Christians."

#### EACC SPONSORED WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The first East Asian Church Women's Conference sponsored by the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) will be held in a suburb of Bangkok, Thailand, Nov. 11-23. The theme for the two-week meeting is "Launch Out into the Deep" (Luke 5:4). Among the 80 church women representatives from 13 countries will be four delegates from Japan; Toshiko Hayashi, member of Women's Dept. of the Kyodan; Hanna Kawai, vice president of Keisen Girls' School in Tokyo; Momo Ueshita, pastor of a church in Kyoto District of the Kyodan; and Masae Harada, member of the Women's Dept. of the Tokyo District of the Kyodan.

During the first week, Dr. D.T.Niles will give the main lectures each day on "The Essence of the Church." Lectures during the second week will be by Rev. A.W.D.Frederick on "The Mission of the Church."

The general topic for the discussion groups will be "The Responsibility of Christian Women in the World Today." The four discussion groups will have the following respective topics: "Responsibility of Christian Women in a Rapidly Changing Society," "Indigenous Church," "Christian Home," and "Stewardship." A seminar will have as its topic "Women's Work in the Church and Society" and will study the organization of women's groups and will discuss the relation of women's groups to society in general and to other women's organizations.

The first East Asia Women's Conference was held in Hong-Kong in 1958. The sponsor was the Women's Dept. of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. As the Conference is to continue with the EACC as sponsor, it was decided to call this year's conference the first conference.

#### 12TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE KYODAN

The Rev. Dr. Isamu Omura and the Rev. Ken Saeki were elected Moderator and Vice Moderator respectively by the 12th General Assembly (Synod) to lead The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) in the continuation of its new Ten-Year Evangelism Program.

Dr. Omura, the New moderator, has been vice moderator of the Kyodan for two terms; he is pastor of Asagaya Church, Tokyo. Mr. Saeki is pastor of Shinagawa Church, Tokyo. The Rev. Kiyoshi Ii, pastor of Tokyo's historic Reinanzaka Church was chosen as



secretary. The new chairman of the important Evangelism Committee is the Rev. Takihiro Yamakita, a prominent Baptist leader before unification and pastor of Misaki-cho Church, Tokyo.

The 400 member biennial General Assembly (Synod) met from October 23-26, 1962, in Tokyo. Its membership included an equal number of lay and clergy delegates and 30 members-at-large, including ten missionaries of American and Canadian churches cooperating with the Kyodan.

Assembly time was devoted to discussions and approval of a few revisions in the Kyodan Constitution designed to articulate the fact that the United Church's unity is not merely "an amalgamation of historic traditions of the past" but "an evidence of the activity of the Holy Spirit in a new creation of unity in the spirit." The revisions were a pending question since the 9th General Assembly.

The respective ecclesiastical and administrative functions of the Kyodan, the local church, and the Kyoku, geographical division, were also debated. A bill was submitted to revise the method of election of the 30 member Executive Board. The bill called for the presence of the Moderator, Vice Moderator and Secretary as before, but instead of the General Assembly electing 27 members, 14 members would be the moderators of the 14 Districts, and only the remaining 13 would be elected by the General Assembly. The bill was submitted to strengthen the sense of responsibility between the Central Offices and the Districts. However, after lengthy discussions on two days, a special committee of 15 members was appointed by the Moderator to investigate the matter further and election of the Executive Board was carried on according to present rules.

The Assembly heard and approved post facto details of the Ten-Year Evangelism Program begun in 1961. The plan had been authorized by the preceding Assembly but the particulars developed since then by the Evangelism Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Saeki.

Central features of the program are 1) "the renewal of the Church," emphasizing the outward reach of the Church in ministry to the needs and challenges of Japanese society; and 2) the "larger parish plan," reflecting both a new strategem in program and a growing consciousness throughout the Church that the situation and needs of each local church are a part of the situation and need of the entire Church.

Paralleling the evangelism plan is the One Billion Yen Fund (\$2,780,000), a ten-year fund-raising program which the Assembly approved, with especially vigorous support from laymen. Funds will be used to strengthen weak churches and for overseas evangelism, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Assembly affirmed the desirability of continued missionary and financial cooperation between the United Church in Japan and churches in American and Canada, although a minority group urged financial independence within a period of five or



ten years. Cooperative funds were called particularly essential for such efforts as rural and industrial pioneer evangelism and mass evangelism.

In the area of cooperation in personnel, the General Assembly heard reports of studies being made to determine the most effective and meaningful kind of participation for missionaries in the life and work of the church today. On the closing day of the Assembly, 46 full-time and short-term missionaries of Kyodan-related churches in America and Canada, who have come to Japan in the last two years, were officially received by The United Church.

At the 1962 Assembly, for the first time in The United Church's history, fraternal delegates from ten churches in other countries attended and brought greetings.

A proposed colloquial version of the church's confession of faith, drawn up to enable the church to speak more intelligibly to man today, was presented to the Assembly, which received the committee's report and commended the confession to local churches.

Regarding the government Constitution and the resolutions from a number of Kyoku in favor of no change at this time, the Assembly referred the matter to the Executive Committee for further action.

#### RETIREMENT AGE LIMIT SET

Central in the discussions at the Executive Committee of the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan, meeting on Oct. 18 for the first time since the 27th General Convention held in May, were the setting of a retirement age limit for clergy and the establishing of a Publication Department.

A proposal made at the General Convention had set the retirement age at 65 for clergy and 68 for bishops but this was changed to 72 for clergy and 75 for bishops and is to go into effect Jan. 1, 1963.

This is the first time such a retirement age limit has been set among Japanese churches and is expected to have an effect on the thinking of other denominations.

#### GRAHAM TO VISIT JAPAN

Billy Graham will arrive in Tokyo March 29, 1963 and conduct a series of crusades in Tokyo, Hokkaido, Nagoya, Hiroshima and Fukuoka, for two weeks. Rev. Graham comes to Japan at the invitation of the Japan Baptist Convention and will assist in campaigns currently carried out by the Japan Baptist New Life Movement. This will be Graham's second visit to Japan.

